

Message Text

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E.O. 11652 N/A

SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION - UNESCO CONFERENCE

EDITORIAL ENTITLED "THE PRESS AND UNESCO" APPEARING IN NOVEMBER 25 TIMES OF MALTA PRAISED UNESCO CONFERENCE FOR OVERCOMING HURDLES OF SOVIET PRESS PROPOSAL AND OF ISRAEL'S MEMBERSHIP IN UNESCO. EDITORIAL WENT ON TO SAY:

BEGIN TEST. THE THIRD MAJOR HURDLE, STILL TO BE DEALT WITH, WAS RAISED WHEN ONE OF THE CONFERENCE COMMISSIONS ADOPTED A DRAFT RESOLUTION CALLING FOR UNESCO TO ALLOCATE SOME HALF A MILLION U.S. DOLLARS "FOR PRELIMINARY STUDIES ON WAYS TO IMPROVE THE FLOW OF NEWS FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES". THE DRAFT CALLS, AMONG OTHER THINGS, FOR "A MORE BALANCED AND DIVERSIFIED EXCHANGE OF NEWS THAN THAT WHICH CURRENTLY EXISTS BETWEEN DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED COUNTRIES".

THE REASONS FOR THIS APPROACH TO EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AROSE FROM CLAIMS MADE BY SOME DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, VAGUELY REFERRED TO AS THE THIRD WORLD, THAT THE MAJOR INDEPENDENT NEWS AGENCIES ARE CONCENTRATED IN THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES OF THE WESTERN WORLD. THE ONLY WAY PUT FORWARD BY SOME THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES, BACKED ALSO BY THE SOVIET UNION, TO WHAT THEY REGARD AS THIS "INFORMATION IMPERIALISM" IS THAT NEWS SHOULD TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS OF EACH NATION.

THIS MAY SOUND JUSTIFIED UNTIL IT IS REALIZED THAT AMONG THOSE WHO COMPLAIN ABOUT BIAS OF NEWS ARE SUCH COUNTRIES
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AS CUBA, UGANDA, NORTH KOREA AND YUGOSLAVIA WHERE THERE IS

NO SUCH THING AS A FREE FLOW OF NEWS.

ANY EVIL INTENTION TO BIAS IS BEST MET BY THE FREE EXCHANGE
OF INFORMATION AND CERTAINLY NOT BY METHODS OF CENSORSHIP
OR GOVERNMENT RESTRICTION OF NEWS. SO MANY DICTATORIAL
REGIMES IN THE THIRD WORLD NOT ONLY EXERCISE SUCH METHODS
IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES, BUT WOULD INVOLVE A CULTURAL WORLD
ORGANIZATION, AS UNESCO, TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR HOLD ON
INFORMATION WHICH THEY SEEK TO CONTROL AT THEIR DISCRETION.
THE ONLY SOUND WAY OF ESTABLISHING BALANCE IS THROUGH
FREE AND RESPONSIBLE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND NOT
THROUGH GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE AIMING AT SHIELDING
GOVERNMENTS FROM LEGITIMATE CRITICISM. END TEXT.
RADDAY

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